

A Study of the Effectiveness of the Education Specialist District Intern Pilot Program in Los Angeles Unified School District: A Report to the Legislature

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Report to the Legislature of the Study of the Effectiveness of the Education Specialist District Intern Pilot Program in Los Angeles Unified School District

Executive Summary

This item presents the proposed report to the Legislature required by Education Code Section 44329. EC § 44329, as amended in 1994, requires the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing to study the effectiveness of the Education Specialist (Mild/Moderate Disabilities) District Intern Pilot Program that is being implemented in Los Angeles Unified School District. The report examines the effectiveness of the pilot project that has been conducted in Los Angeles over the last four years, and provides a series of conclusions and recommendations based on the data collected.

District Intern statutes require the Commission to examine the effectiveness of the Education Specialist (Mild/Moderate Disabilities) District Intern Pilot Program that is being implemented in Los Angeles Unified School District. In the course of the evaluation the Commission is required to make recommendations of the ability of this pilot project to prepare high quality special education teachers? The following policy questions are addressed.

- Was the pilot program effective in preparing special education teachers?
- Does the program help meet the shortage of special education teachers in Los Angeles Unified School District?
- What are the criteria and circumstances necessary for this pilot preparation program to be expanded to other districts and other disability areas?

Using data collected in 56 questionnaires from district interns, 115 interviews conducted with those administering, teaching or participating in the education specialist program, and reviewing documents from the program, this report provides answers to the policy questions posed in the previous paragraph.

Based on the data that was collected from participants in the pilot program, the Commission staff has reached the following 11 conclusions.

1. The program and its interns meet all of the minimum requirements of the applicable statutes and standards of quality. All of the interns meet the entry requirements stipulated in statute and the 660 clock hour instructional program provides opportunities to learn the skills and knowledge necessary to teach students with mild to moderate disabilities.

2. Twenty-eight percent of the education specialist interns are from ethnic and racial groups underrepresented in the teaching workforce. Thirty-seven percent of the interns are male. Seventy-four percent are over thirty years old, and three-quarters of the interns entered teaching as a second career. Therefore, the interns are older, more diverse, male, more career experienced than the average beginning special education teacher.

3. Interns chose this program primarily because of the financial advantages provided by the program, including being tuition free. They also selected the program because of its emphasis on practical, hands-on application of educational skills and knowledge. The third most frequent reason mentioned was the reputation of the district intern program has for providing high quality teacher preparation.

On average interns spend twenty seven hours teaching weekly, eleven hours planning, four and a half hours attending classes, three hours receiving support, and three hours in other teaching related activities.

4. Although the district interns receive support from a variety of sources, this is an area where services can be improved. Many interns reported not receiving formal mentor support during the first month of their teaching responsibilities. Most of the mentors were not at the same schools as their assigned interns. Support providers provided assistance in a variety of areas including planning and problem solving. There was a consistent pattern of observation of interns, and there were opportunities for interns to observe other teachers.

5. There are thirty-one instructional modules in the program. Most of the instructors are Los Angeles Unified School District employees. They are selected and supervised by the Human Resources and Special Education Branches. The curriculum was developed by the Special Education Division with the assistance of a special education professor from California State University Fullerton.

6&7. The cost of the program to the district is \$3200 per intern per year. \$1500 of this is covered by a alternative certification grant from the State of California. The program is tuition free for interns. There is a mechanism for district intern transcripts, but its implementation has not been fully accepted including by universities.

8&9. Although the pilot program in Los Angeles Unified School District is meeting its overall goals of preparing effective special education teachers and helping meet the district's shortage of qualified special education teachers, there are areas of the program that need attention. There are areas of the instructional program that were rated lower than other areas including knowledge of the use of technology and assistive devices. The interns also requested more knowledge of certain disorders such as attention deficit disorder. Interns also suggested that clearer goals, course syllabi and coordinated assignments would improve the program.

The support system was the area that was the most frequently cited as needing the most improvement. Many interns did not receive mentor support assigned to them during the critical first month of teaching. Much of the formal support is done by mentors who must travel considerable distances to observe and assist their assigned interns.

10&11. This program has shown that designing and implementing a district intern education specialist program is no small undertaking. The program developers must have the capacity to create instructional modules that address all of the areas that a special education teacher must know and be able to do. In this pilot there are 31 instructional modules. The program developers must have sufficient instructors and support providers to assure that each course is well taught and each intern is well supported. This is quite difficult even in a district the size of Los Angeles Unified School District. When asked, the administrators of the program did not believe that currently they had the capacity or the resources to expand into other areas of disability.

The advice of this pilot district to others who might wish to develop such a program was to first look to university programs to see if the university's capacity can be grown to help meet the shortage needs, and then examine the district's or consortium of district's capacity. That capacity must include releasing administrators from other duties; developing a complete instructional program; recruiting, selecting and training instructors; monitoring their instruction; developing an evaluation system for the instructional program and assessing the classroom performance of interns. The program must also recruit, select and train support providers and organize the logistics of a support system.

Based upon the data collected in this pilot study, it is the judgment of the Commission that most districts or consortium of districts do not have the capacity to develop and implement a special education district intern program. Los Angeles Unified School District should be congratulated for undertaking this pilot program. The Commission has every expectation that they will continue to operate an effective program and will improve in those areas where concerns were found.

Report to the Legislature of the Study of the Effectiveness of the Education Specialist District Intern Pilot Program in Los Angeles Unified School District

**Professional Services Division
March 20, 1999**

Background

Relevant Statutes That Require This Report

In 1994 the statutes that pertain to district intern programs were amended to authorize the Los Angeles Unified School District to conduct a pilot study of a District Intern Program for Education Specialists: Mild/Moderate Disabilities. The statute required that the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing conduct a study of the effectiveness of the special education pilot program and report the results of the pilot study to the Legislature in 1999.

Historical Background of the District Intern Program

The District Intern Program was initiated as part of Senate Bill 813, the Hughes-Hart Education Reform Act of 1983. As part of a comprehensive package of school reforms, this statute established an alternative route into teaching for single subject teachers. The program was originally known as the Teacher Trainee Certificate Program. The statute created an opportunity for school districts to initiate internship programs. Teacher trainees had to possess baccalaureate degrees, but they were not required to enroll in university courses during the internship. Instead, as a condition for employing teacher trainees, the 1983 statute required each school district to provide teacher trainees (interns) with the support of mentor teachers or other experienced educators who were designated through a competitive search and evaluation process. In addition to holding a baccalaureate degree, trainees are required to pass the state basic skills examination (CBEST), demonstrate subject matter competence by examination, and hold a major or minor in their subject area.

Legislation passed in 1984 requires a Professional Clear Credential be granted upon satisfactory completion of a two-year District Intern Program. The recommendation for the credential is made by the governing board of the participating school district. If the Commission denies the credential, it must show that the candidate is incompetent. District Interns are not required to meet the same statutory requirements (i.e., health education, special education, and computer education) as other applicants for Clear Teaching Credentials. Furthermore, California laws did not allow the Commission to govern the quality of District Intern Programs to the same extent the Commission governs University Intern Programs. The applicable statutes specifically prohibited the Commission from approving or accrediting Teacher Trainee programs.

In 1987, legislation authored by Senator Teresa Hughes gave the Teacher Trainee Program a new name: the District Intern Program. Moreover, the program was expanded to include elementary and bilingual classrooms, and the Commission was required to adopt Standards of Program Quality and Effectiveness for District Intern Programs. In addition to the requirements listed above, for Bilingual Programs interns were required to demonstrate oral (speaking) proficiency in the target language and take additional bilingual methods coursework. Statutes related to BCLAD district interns demonstrate oral proficiency in the target language: whereas, candidates in university BCLAD programs or teachers who complete a BCLAD certificate program must demonstrate proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in the target language. A preservice program was added to each intern's professional development plan. The 1987 statute required 120 clock-hours of instruction in areas such as child development, pedagogy, and classroom management.

To implement the 1987 internship statute, the Commission, in 1988, adopted and disseminated *Standards of Program Quality and Effectiveness for District Intern Programs*. The standards are largely the same as those used to evaluate University Intern Programs. The main differences are that the district intern standards do not require mentor teachers to participate in evaluating interns. The 1987 statute also required the Commission to evaluate District Intern programs periodically on the basis of its standards. However, the statute did not give the Commission the authority to require any changes in the programs nor impose any sanctions if the programs were found to be substandard in any area.

In 1994, lawmakers made more changes in the District Intern Program. Senate Bill 1657 (Hughes, Chapter 673 of the Statutes of 1994), provides a second option for demonstrating subject matter competence: completion of a Commission-approved subject matter program. With this change, both district and university programs have two options: exams and programs. The Bilingual District Intern Program was reduced from three years to two years and changed to a BCLAD (Bilingual-Crosscultural Language and Academic Development) Emphasis Program.

The 1994 statute also allows the Los Angeles Unified School District to conduct a pilot study of a District Intern Program for Education Specialists: Mild/Moderate Disabilities. The statute required that a study of the effectiveness of the special education pilot program be conducted and the results of the pilot study be reported to the Legislature in 1999. The 1994 statute also requires the Commission to develop standards for Mild/Moderate Special Education District Intern Programs. The standards were drafted in consultation with the Los Angeles Unified School District and the Commission's Special Education Advisory Panel. Those standards were adopted by the Commission in December 1996, and have been the basis for the implementation of the pilot credential program.

In 1996, AB 1432 (Richter), eliminated the requirement to provide a statement of need for the district intern program. This allows districts to hire district interns in any single or multiple subject teaching area and hire interns even if certificated teachers are available. Districts still are required to certify that they will provide the required training, support, and evaluation that is stipulated in the District Intern statutes.

In 1998, SB 2042 was enacted into law. Included in the credential reforms provided by this legislation was the requirement that all teacher preparation programs be subject to the same approval and accreditation processes, standards and procedures.

Previous Studies and Evaluations of District Intern Programs

Education Code Section 44329 requires that the Commission study the effectiveness of the District Intern Program and report its effectiveness to the Legislature. The Commission produced the first report to the Legislature in 1987 entitled *The Effectiveness of the Teacher Trainee Program: An Alternative Route into Teaching in California*. That report was the most extensive report on alternative certification that had been produced in this country to date. The report included descriptive information on the alternatives available, presentations of the data that were collected through questionnaires, interviews with interns, support persons, evaluators, instructors and program administrators, and classroom observations of district interns (then called teacher trainees), a matched sample of second year traditionally trained teachers, and second year emergency permit holders. The report examined the instructional plan, the support system, and the evaluation process. It analyzed the effectiveness of the beginning teachers using the data collected in the nearly 500 classroom observations that were conducted. The study also reported on those who had left the program before completing the required two years of instruction. Finally, the report arrived at a series of conclusions and made five recommendations to the Legislature.

AB 2985 (Quackenbush), Chapter 1464 of the 1990 Statutes, required that the Commission review alternative avenues for persons to teach in California. The 1992 report, *Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification in California: A Report to the Legislature*, presents the array of options that are available to become teachers, examines alternative certification in other states, describes and illustrates the certification options, discusses the public policy implications of the available options, and recommends several ways to improve alternative certification.

In 1996, the Commission produced the second statewide study of District Intern Programs. The report entitled *The Effectiveness of District Intern Programs of Alternative Teacher Certification in California: A Longitudinal Study*, provided an analysis of the effectiveness, strengths and weaknesses of district intern programs drawing on the 1987 study and examining data collected over the next seven years including extensive data collected from candidates and graduates of district intern programs during that period.

This report presents data and recommendations about the Education Specialist District Intern Pilot Program conducted by Los Angeles Unified School District. It is the third mandated data-based study of district intern programs. The plan for this study was approved by the Commission in July, 1998.

In addition to the statewide studies of all District Intern Programs, the Commission is also required to evaluate specific district intern programs to determine if the programs meet the Standards of Program Quality established by the Commission. In the 14 years of its existence, more than thirty California school districts or consortia of districts have implemented Teacher Trainee/District Intern Programs. Most of these districts have participated in one or two cycles and then dropped out. Those programs that have recommended more than one set of interns for credentials have been scheduled for on-site review by a team of reviewers. There are approximately 20 other school districts who have prepared four or fewer interns and are no longer participating in preparing district interns. Other than participation in statewide surveys, these programs have not been evaluated.

More than 85 percent of all District Intern Certificates have been issued to interns in one school district--the Los Angeles Unified School District. Their program was the first to be evaluated by an on-site review team in 1993. The program is scheduled for their next review in Spring of 2000. The District Intern Program administered by San Diego City Unified School District was reviewed in January 1997. Project Pipeline, a consortium of several school districts, was reviewed in November 1997. The Long Beach Unified School District program was evaluated in April, 1998. Compton Unified School District and Ontario-Montclair School District are scheduled for review in Spring, 2000. Project Impact, a consortium of districts in San Joaquin and San Bernardino Counties, will be evaluated in 2001.

Education Specialist Credential Structure Adopted in 1996

An important function of any licensing system is to ensure that work done by licensees is related to their professional preparation. This function is especially important in the field of special education where the authorizations of credentials and the preparation of practitioners must be closely aligned with each other.

For the field of special education, the Commission adopted a two-level credential structure for university-based programs. Fundamental changes are occurring in how and where students with disabilities are being served, and because general educators and special educators need extended preparation to meet a broader range of student needs, including those formerly assumed by resource specialists. Two phases, or levels, of training are important because special education professionals are increasingly expected to act as consultants and collaborators with general education teachers and other practitioners in mainstream settings. The two-level structure is designed to meet the changing, growing needs of schools and children.

In adopting the two-stage structure for these credentials, the Commission also decided to drop the requirement that special education teachers earn Multiple or Single Subject Teaching Credentials. To prepare special education practitioners for collaboration with general education teachers, the Commission's new standards require special education candidates to complete coursework and fieldwork in general education as well as special education.

In the Commission's restructured system of special education credentials, the major purpose of the Preliminary Level I program is to prepare individuals to perform the responsibilities of entry-level special education teaching positions in a variety of settings. Preliminary Level I programs will include coursework and field experience in both special education and general education. Subject matter requirements for Level I Education Specialist Credentials will be the same as for Preliminary Multiple and Single Subject Teaching Credentials: completion of approved subject matter preparation program or passage of adopted subject matter assessments.

In the Commission's new special education credential structure, Professional Level II preparation is intended to enable new teachers to apply their Preliminary Level I preparation to the demands of professional positions while also fostering advanced skills and knowledge. In adopting new certification policies in 1993, the Commission expected that Professional Level II would include academic requirements, an individualized induction plan with a support component, and an option to allow some requirements to be met with non-university activities. Features of a Level II program include the following:

Development and Administration of the Induction Plan. The beginning teacher, the employer and the institution will collaboratively design a Professional Induction Plan. The Plan will include any academic requirements that apply to all teachers in the program, plus individualized studies and consultations to address the new teacher's needs. The period of induction with a support provider should be at least one full year while the new teacher is employed in a special education position.

Support Activities. The beginning teacher's Professional Induction Plan will include consultations with an assigned support provider, who will meet periodically with the new special education teacher to review class plans, discuss instructional practices, and decide on ways to apply principles that the teacher learned in coursework. As a basis for professional development consultations, the support provider and the new teacher will also view each other's classes from time to time. The support provider will be involved in the ongoing assessment and completion of the Professional Induction Plan, not in the evaluation of new teachers for the purpose of making employment decisions.

There are two options available for university preparation programs to implement the new Education Specialist Credential structure. The first option provides instruction at two distinct levels. The second option permits universities to develop integrated programs that address the new Level I and Level II requirements in a continuous sequence, rather than addressing these requirements in distinct Level I programs and Level II programs. At the conclusion of the integrated programs, candidates earn Professional Level II Education Specialist Credentials.

Option Two is the option that pertains to District Intern Education Specialist Programs. Under Option Two all Preliminary Level I and Professional Level II requirements are included in the design of a single, continuous program. The District Intern Standards that were developed have used a single, continuous format without distinguishing specific standards as Level I or Level II. However, the standards do address the same areas as in a conventional program. Some of the "core" special education competencies should be addressed in the required preservice component of the internship; the remaining requirements must be completed later in the two year integrated sequence of special education studies.

District Intern Education Specialist: Mild/Moderate Disabilities Program

The enabling statutes require the Pilot District Intern Education Specialist: Mild/Moderate Disabilities Program to be three years in length (one year in general education and two years in special education), or four years if the intern is participating in a program that leads to the attainment of both a multiple or single subject credential (2 years) and a specialist credential (2 years). A District Intern Program for Education Specialists: Mild/Moderate Disabilities requires participants to complete the first year of a Multiple or Single Subject District Intern Program including the 120 clock hour preservice program and other first year portions of the district's Professional Development Plan, as well as one year of supported and evaluated teaching.

The Professional Development Plan for district interns teaching in special education programs for pupils with mild and moderate disabilities also includes a second 120 clock hours of mandatory preservice training and orientation after the initial year in general education, which includes, but is not limited to, instruction in the development of exceptional children and the methods of teaching exceptional children (EC 44830.3 (b)(7)). Based on the recommendation of the district's governing board, interns receive Professional Credentials which are the same as Level II Professional Education Specialist Credentials. This means that the District Intern Education Specialist Program must address both Level I and Level II knowledge, skills, and applications.

In April 1996, the Commission approved *Standards of Program Quality and Effectiveness for Education Specialist Credential Programs*. These standards were used as the basis for developing *Standards for District Intern Programs: Professional Education Specialist Credentials for Teaching Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities*. These Standards were approved by the Commission in December, 1996. The standards are the same as those approved for university Education Specialist Intern programs.

Education Specialist Credentials, including District Intern Credentials, in Mild/Moderate Disabilities authorize the provision of services to individuals in grades K through 12, including adults. The preparation program must provide interns with knowledge and opportunities for application with students demonstrating the following behaviors.

Mild/Moderate Disabilities. Students with mild/moderate disabilities may be inefficient learners who have difficulties imposing structure on learning tasks. They may display delays in intellectual development, specific learning disabilities, and/or serious emotional disturbances. Frequently their behavior is characterized by under achievement, failure expectancy, and social competence deficits. They may be impulsive, easily distracted, and inattentive. Further, they may experience difficulties in generalizing skills, and in predicting events or consequences of behavior.

This credential authorizes the teaching of individuals with specific learning disabilities, mental retardation, other health impaired, and serious emotional disturbance. Educational specialists preparing to work with students who have mild to moderate disabilities must be skilled at creating, developing, and implementing individualized adaptations and accommodations to facilitate access to learning in a wide variety of environments, such as academic, vocational, social, and community. This includes access to the core curriculum, now emphasized in state and federal regulations or IEP mandates, specialized curricula, learning and transition strategies, and the use of current and adaptive technologies.

Magnitude of the Shortage of Special Education Teachers

In June, 1998, the governing board of Los Angeles Unified School District recommended the first sixteen graduates of the Pilot District Intern Education Specialist Program. There are 34 Education Specialist Interns entering their third year in the program, and 19 interns completing their education specialist preservice program and beginning their first year in a classroom with students with mild to moderate disabilities. There are 23 interns beginning the first year of the program. In the first year interns serve in general education classrooms.

In 1998 Los Angeles Unified School District teaching workforce includes the following Learning Handicapped(LH) or Mild/Moderate(M/M) special education teachers. There is a total of 737 fully credentialed LH or M/M disability teachers. There are 414 LH or M/M teachers on Emergency Permits. 215 teachers are serving in LH or M/M classrooms on credential waivers. There are also 46 LH or M/M university interns. This year the district opened 122 new classrooms for learning disabled children. With all of the staffing listed above, there are still 60 vacant learning disabled classrooms.

In 1997-98, there were 1,311 Learning Handicapped Mild/Moderate Disabilities teachers recommended for full credentials by California colleges and universities. 463 of those teachers were recommended by colleges and universities in the Los Angeles basin. 82 new fully credentialed teachers were hired by Los Angeles USD in 1998. The recommendations for Learning Handicapped or Mild/Moderate Disability Credentials are displayed in Table 1. Simply put, LAUSD could have hired all of the available fully credentialed teachers in the Los Angeles basin and still would not have met its staffing needs.

Table 1

**Recommendations for Learning Handicapped Credentials
by Los Angeles Basin Colleges and Universities in 1997-98.**

University	Credential Recommendations
Cal Polytechnic University, Pomona	33
CSU Dominguez Hills	85
CSU Fullerton	36
CSU Los Angeles	13
CSU Long Beach	47
CSU Northridge	82
CSU San Bernardino	56
Azusa Pacific University	51
California Baptist University	6
California Lutheran University	18
Loyola Marymont University	11
La Sierra University	2
Mount Saint Mary's College	6
Point Loma Nazarene U., Pasadena	5
Pacific Oaks College	6
The Masters College	2
University of La Verne	4
Total	463

Procedures Used in the Study

Based upon the plan approved by the Commission in July 1998, the Commission staff used a series of questionnaires and interviews to examine the Pilot District Intern Education Specialist Program in Los Angeles Unified School District. Based on the data collected in these questionnaires and interviews and information provided by Los Angeles Unified School District, staff has collected information on the effectiveness of the program to prepare teachers to instruct students with mild to moderate disabilities. This report also makes recommendations on both the program's strengths and areas where improvement are needed, and, finally, makes recommendations on both the continuation of this program and its potential transportability to other districts as requested by the Legislature and Governor when this statute was enacted.

Materials collected. The materials that were collected included the following.

- Professional Development Plans or Induction plans prepared by the district.
- Evaluations done by the district.
- Samples of instructional materials; samples of products from portfolios submitted by instructors and interns.
- Samples of instruments used to observe, assess competence, or evaluate intern performance.

Questionnaires. Questionnaires were given to all graduates and current interns, and, if possible, persons who left the Pilot Program. The questions ask for descriptive, qualitative, and attitudinal information. Fifty-six questionnaires were returned. Ten of sixteen graduates returned questionnaires, twenty-eight of thirty-one persons who were in the second year of the special education program, which is the third year in the district intern program since the interns spend their initial year in a general education classroom. Eighteen persons in the first year of the special education program returned questionnaires. The overall return rate is 85 percent. Table 2 displays the questionnaire return rate.

Table 2
Questionnaire Return Rate

District interns	Total in Program	Total Returning Questionnaires
Second Year in District Intern Program	19	18
Third Year in Program	31	28
Graduates	16	10
Total	66	56

Interviews. Interviews were conducted with a sample of the following: graduates and current interns in the pilot program; instructors and support providers; administrators of the program; assessors of intern performance; governing board members; and those responsible for resources. The interviews focused on qualitative issues, particularly strengths and weaknesses and ways to improve the program. Table 3 displays the titles of the persons who were interviewed.

Table 3
Number of Persons Interviewed

District Administrators	14
District Intern Administrators	4

Site Administrators	14
Support Staff	23
Instructors	17
Graduates	11
Interns year 3	20
Interns year 2	11
Board Member	1
Total	115

Throughout this report, staff has used quotes from interns to illustrate the topics of the report. The quotes were taken from the intern's responses to the open ended questions in the questionnaire or from the interviews. The quotes are indicated and the speaker can be identified using the following code: G = Graduate Intern, X = Second Year Interns, Z = Third Year Interns.

Policy Questions to be Addressed

There are three general policy questions that were addressed in the course of the study. These are:

- Was the pilot program effective in preparing special education teachers?
- Does the program help meet the shortage of special education teachers in Los Angeles Unified School District?
- What are the criteria and circumstances necessary for this pilot preparation program to be expanded to other districts and other disability areas?

To ascertain the answers to these questions the Commission Staff formulated a series of more specific questions that were examined through the use of questionnaires, interviews, document review, and direct inquiries to district administrators. The specific questions were.

1. Does the program meet the minimum requirements of the appropriate statutes?
 - Do the interns meet minimum entry requirements?
 - Does the program provide required instructional and service requirements; e.g., one year in general education and two preservice programs?
 - Do the interns successfully complete all Level I and Level II requirements; e.g., a professional induction plan?
2. What is the nature of the District Intern Education Specialist Program?
 - What are the backgrounds of the participants?
 - What are the criteria for selection?
 - What elements of instruction are included in the professional development plan/professional induction plan?
 - What is the nature of the classroom assignment?
 - What are the intern's attitudes toward teaching and learning?
3. Does the program provide high quality instructional opportunities and opportunities to apply all competencies included in the Commission's District Intern Mild/Moderate Education Specialist Standards?
4. Are interns appropriately assigned, supported and assessed? How are assignments made and what are the qualifications of those designated to support interns?
5. How are personnel that offer instruction, support, and assessment services assigned to the project?
6. What is the cost of the program?
7. What procedures have been implemented to facilitate transfer of credit as called for in Education Code 44327?

8. In what ways should the program be improved? What are the strengths of the program?
9. Is the program capable of preparing teachers for other areas of disability?
10. What is the potential for the transportability of the program?
11. What, if any, are the elements that should be included by any district that might elect to implement a District Intern Mild/Moderate Education Specialist Program?

Results of the Study

1. Does the program meet the minimum requirements of the appropriate statutes?

Staff examined the data provided by the fifty-six interns who returned questionnaires and forty-two interns who were interviewed. In each case the interns met the minimum requirements stipulated in the district intern statutes. All had met the entry requirements of holding a baccalaureate degree with sufficient units equivalent to a minor in a subject field. All had passed the relevant subject matter exam, and completed character identification. All had completed the first year of the program in a general education setting.

All Education Specialist interns completed an initial preservice preparation program, 120 clock hours in length in the general education topics of child development, classroom management strategies and pedagogy. The summer following their year in a general education classroom the education specialists interns had completed a second 120 clock hour preservice program focused on foundational principles of special education. The interns complete a common professional induction plan which includes a total of 660 hours of instruction, a support system that continues throughout the program and an assessment system that includes both formative assessment, portfolio assessment, and summative assessment (Stull Process.) One current intern described the instructional program in the following way.

The Educational Specialist Program is a lot more informative than the program I attended last year. The three week orientation was thorough, practical and well organized. I feel that I have a lot more support from district personnel this year. I am learning quite a bit. I believe it is important to learn teaching skills, immediately practice, then get feedback right away. (X9)

2. What are the Characteristics of the Education Specialist District Interns?

In each of the studies of district intern programs, the Commission has explored the nature of those who chose to enter/were selected for the program. The collegiate background of the interns was also surveyed. Table 4 presents these data. The majority of the Education Specialists received their baccalaureate from a California State University campus. Twenty percent are graduates of the University of California, and twenty-three percent hold baccalaureates from colleges and universities outside of California.

Since its inception, 89 persons have been admitted to the District Intern Program. Twenty-three began their first year in general education classrooms in September, 1998. Because these persons had just entered the program, questionnaire and interview data were not collected from them. There are nineteen interns in the first year in special education classrooms, and thirty-one in their second year in the special education portion of the program. Sixteen persons graduated from the program in June 1998 and were recommended for Clear Education Specialist Credentials (Mild/Moderate Disabilities).

Seventy-two percent of the Education Specialist interns are Caucasian. Persons of Asian and Pacific Islander origin make up 11.2% of the intern population; African Americans are 10.1%, and persons of Hispanic origin are 4.5%. Thirty-seven percent of the education specialist interns are male. Twenty-six are thirty years of age or younger; 31% are between 31 and 40; 39% are 41-55; and 4% are 56 or older. Among those who hold advanced degrees, one person holds a degree in law (J.D.s) and one person holds a Ph.D. in Folklore.

Table 4

Degrees Held and Colleges Attended by Education Specialists District Interns

N=56				
Institution	BA	BA/S	MA/S	Post MA

CSU	32	0	4	0
UC	11	0	1	1
CA Private	4	0	1	0
Out of State Private	6	0	1	0
Out of State Public	7	0	3	1
Out of Country	1	0	0	0
Total	61	0	10	2

Candidates received their baccalaureate degree from nine of the CSU campuses and five of the UC campuses. The most frequent major was psychology (20), followed by business (9) and fine arts (8).

Besides meeting the statutory minimum requirements, education specialists must meet other district requirements including having prior experiences with students with disabilities and positive pre-dispositions toward students with disabilities. Students are admitted as a cohort. They take all of their coursework together and form a strong bond of collegueship and friendship over the three year period.

One second year intern and a graduate described the advantages of cohort support in the following statements.

The cohort is the major strength of the program as you get to collaborate while problems are in process. This also helps because you don't feel so isolated. (X18)

(The strength of the program is) a cohort group of other Special Education teachers to exchange ideas, successes, and failures with. (G7)

As with earlier studies the majority of those who entered the Education Specialist program came to teaching after employment in another occupation. In this study previously employed means working full time or nearly full time in the position for more than a year. Employment also means a position held after the completion of college. More than three-quarters of the interns indicated that they had come into teaching as a second career. Many of the interns had more than one prior career. Table 5 presents the occupations that were held by the Education Specialists Interns.

Table 5
Employment Background of
Education Specialist District Interns

Occupations	Number	Percentage
Aerospace	0	0
Clerical, Office Work	12	14.1
College/University	2	2.4
Emergency Permit Holders	1	1.1
Food Industry	0	0
Management, Accounting	7	8.2
Manufacturing	0	0
Medical	1	1.1
Military	0	0
Other	2	2.4
Paraprofessionals	2	2.4
Sales, Marketing, Service Industries	24	28.2
Social Services	10	11.8
Teaching (Private Schools, College)	22	25.9
Technical Engineering	2	2.4
TOTAL	85	100%

Many of the interns were first employed by Los Angeles Unified School District on an emergency permit or a credential waiver. Others had taught in another educational venue such as a private school. Nearly one quarter of the interns had previously been employed as a paraprofessional. Table 6 shows the positions in education that interns have held. Most of the interns had been employed in the district or some other education institution for more than two years before entering the Education Specialist District Intern Program.

Table 6

**Previous Positions Held by District Intern
Education Specialists in Teaching**

	Graduate N=10	Interns in First Year N=18	Interns in Second Year N=28	Total
Long Term Emergency Permit	4	6	10	20
30-Day Substitute Emergency Permit	4	7	9	20
Credential Waiver	3	2	4	9
Other Credential	0	0	1	1
Community College	0	0	0	0
Taught in Another State	1	1	1	3
Taught a Private School	2	4	7	13
Taught in a Child Care Center or Preschool	2	1	6	9
Paraprofessional	2	1	10	13
Adult School Teacher	0	3	2	5
College Instructor/Assistant	2	1	4	7
Other	1	3	1	5
Totals	21	29	55	105

As with earlier studies, the Commission staff was interested in determining what was the motivation for the Education Specialist Intern's interest in being a teacher. Table 7 compares the responses given by the Education Specialist Interns with the responses given by district interns in a previous study and the responses given by perspective teachers in a national study. The top two answers were similar in all three populations with the "value and significance of education in society" being ranked highest, followed by "desire to work with young people." It appears that the education specialists as a group find opportunities for growth, long time interest in teaching and the influence of family members to be quite important.

Interns were asked why they chose this program rather than another program. Nearly all of the comments fell into three categories. By far the most frequently mentioned reason was the financial advantages provided by the program. Thirty-two of the fifty-six respondents said the most compelling reason was that the program was tuition free and that they would get salary and benefits while learning to teach. The second most common response was the practical nature of the program. Twenty-one of the interns stated that the hands-on approaches and on-the-job training made this program preferable to other programs. The third reason that was stated by fifteen of the interns was they believed they would get high quality preparation that would prepare them well to be a special education teacher.

The strengths of the program are the ability to implement strategies immediately, build a teaching support group immediately (other interns) and the ability to put food on the table while I am attending educational opportunity. (Z 21)

(The program) allows me to work in the classroom while earning a credential. The actual practice of teaching is the chief method of learning one's craft. Sometimes the D.I. program provides more practical and relevant things for teaching than the university program. I have done both, including student teaching, through a university program. (Z 10)

The main strength is the practical application to our classroom. (Especially the Special Ed. Summer session – so wonderful!) You learn how to stay above water (i.e. teach the basics), then you go back and refine your skills. (X11)

Table 7

**Comparison With National Sample on Reasons
Why District Interns Have Interest in Being a Teacher**

Reasons	District Intern Graduates 1996 N=216		NCEI Prospective Teachers* 1992 N=1,003		Total Los Angeles District Intern Participants N=56	
Value or significance of education in society	54%	1	69%	1	55%	2
Desire to work with young people	42%	2	65%	2	59%	1
Interest in subject-matter field	25%	3	36%	3	12%	7
Encouraged by a teacher in elementary or secondary school	7%		21%	5	3%	12
Encouraged by a professor or adviser in college	2%		7%	8	3%	12
Spend more time with my family	7%		6%		3%	12
Financial rewards	5%		3%		--	14
Fringe benefits	11%	10	8%	7	3%	12
Job security	15%	6	6%		11%	8
Long Vacations	5%	5	7%	8	9%	9
Employment mobility	15%	6	1%		14%	6
Preparation program appealed to me	1%		0%		5%	11
Want a change from other work	10%		9%	6	5%	11
Need to increase income in the family	1%		2%		3%	12
Influenced by family member who has a disability	1%		1%		9%	9
Always wanted to be a teacher	15%	7	4%		23%	4
Opportunity for a lifetime of self growth	12%	9	32%	4	27%	3
One of the professions open to me	19%	5	2%		7%	10
Loss of employment	14%	8	5%		2%	13
Influenced by a family member who is/was a teacher	9%		--		21%	5
Interested in school reform	10%		--		5%	11
Interested in contributing to my community	22%	4	--		7%	10
Other	11%		9%		11%	8

*Source: National Center for Educational Information

What Is the Nature and Scope of the Preparation Program?

Below is the description of the design of the program that was written by the directors of the program. The description is followed by a list of the courses for the three years of the program including the first year in general education and the two years in special education. The first year could be spent in an elementary classroom, a secondary classroom or a middle school core classroom. The initial year is spent in a classroom most likely to be similar to the intern's special education placement.

District Intern Program PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN Special Education, 1998-99

Los Angeles Unified School District
Division of Instruction
Professional Development Branch

Program Design

The Special Education Specialist Credential Program is administered by Mary H. Lewis, Program Director, with the assistance of Norm Marks, Coordinator, and LaKecia Smith, Advisor. There are four District Intern Alternative Certification Program options: Elementary, Elementary Bilingual, Middle School and Secondary. The organizational structure is designed with the District Intern Alternative Certification Program Office as part of the Division of Instruction and Professional Development Unit. The Program has a history of fourteen years of intra-office and intra-program collaboration and support with many other District internal units: Division of Instruction, Special Education Unit, Language Acquisition and Development Branch, Program Evaluation and Research Branch, Intergroup Relations, Parent Community Services and the Personnel Division.

Our program design highlights the use of working practitioners to interpret and model California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) and the new Standards for the Teaching Profession as a centerpiece of our instructional thrust. District Intern instructors are District employees chosen for their expertise within a subject specific discipline. Most have a Master's Degree and many are guest lecturers or part-time instructors at local universities. Periodically, the instructional component provides opportunities to share local and nationally recognized authorities such as Harry Wong (The First Days of School), Joan McClintic (Assertive Discipline), and Florine Rosen (Gender Roles and Responsibilities and Sexual Harassment).

Background

In response to a very critical need for certificated special education teachers, the District was permitted to offer intern contracts for Learning Handicapped Specialists positions under Senate Bill Number 181, authored by Senator Theresa Hughes. In the Fall of 1994, the first group of Special Education District Interns began their training. Recognizing that the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing was rapidly proceeding with restructuring Special Education Credentials, the District Intern Program proactively designed its program to not only meet the standards in place at the time, but to be in step with the “new” standards. Consequently the teacher preparation program for the Education Specialist Mild/Moderate Disabilities is comprehensively designed to meet the CCTC Standards adopted in 1996.

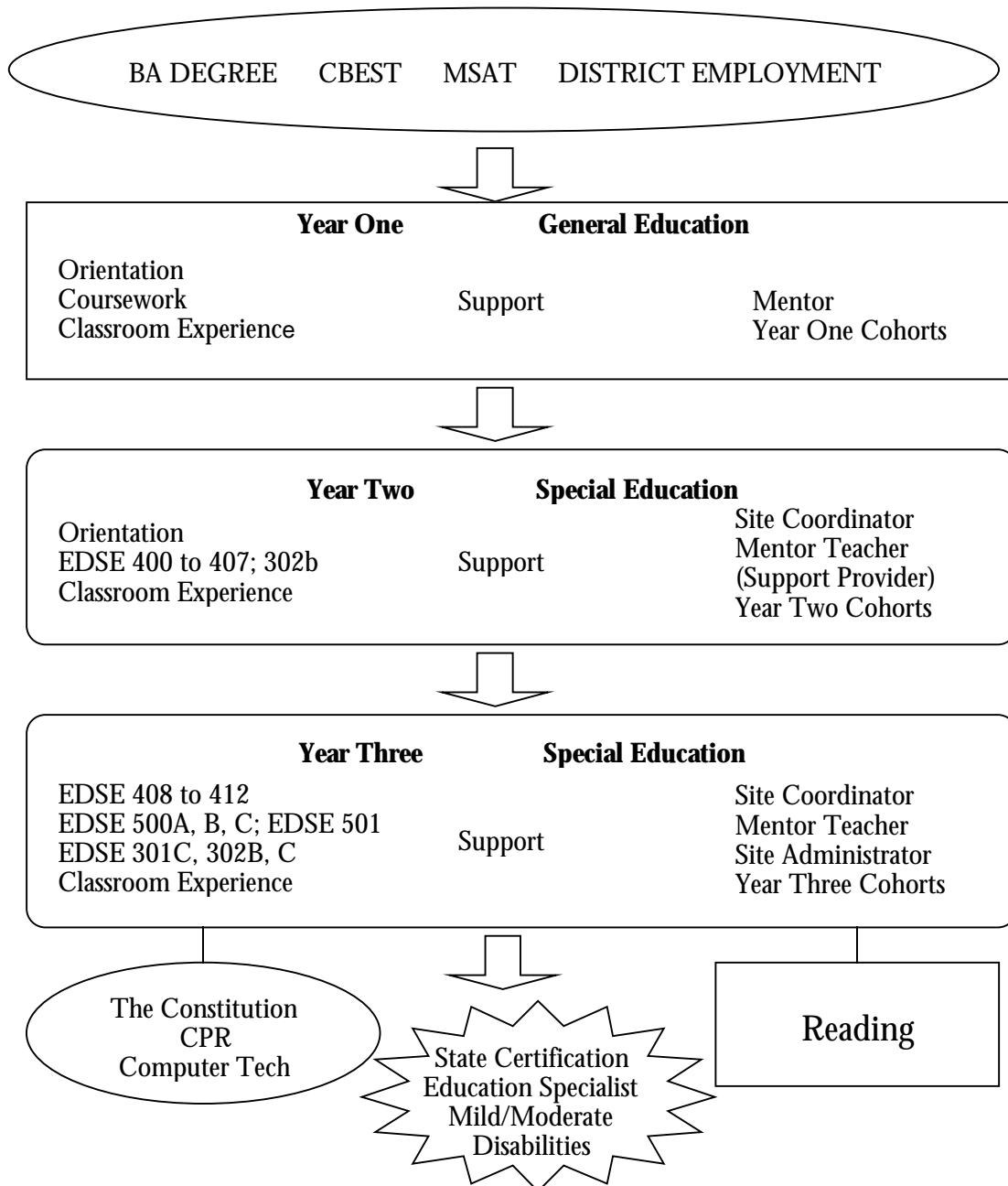
We have worked very closely with California State University at Fullerton to develop a three-year special education specialist alternative certification program option. Our program provides a 120-hour pre-service program and a one full academic year of general education experience which has been designed as an option to Special Education Internship. Under Option Two the District offers a singular, integrated program that includes all Level I and Level II Credential requirements.

The program is composed of field-based learning with a sound grounding in the theoretical, historical and philosophical foundations of special education practices. Candidates for the program must first pass the CBEST and the MSAT before their acceptance to the program. They are recruited and screened by the District's Personnel Division. Several special recruitment and informational meetings are held periodically during the academic year. In addition, recruitment information is sent along with pay warrants several times during the year. The local site administration or site counsel selects candidates after an interview process.

Conceptual Framework/Knowledge Base The design of the program, while aligned with the CCTC standards, is firmly grounded in contemporary, research based practices in special education for students with mild/moderate disabilities. Coursework has been planned to comply with the legal requirements as mandated by Federal and State laws, (PL 105-17, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, IDEA; Section 504 of the 1973 Vocational Rehabilitation Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA; the Hughes Bill) and local District guidelines. Positive behavior support is addressed in course work and in advanced training.

The conceptual framework of the program is based upon the developmental theories of Piaget tempered by the Vygotskian perspective of learning in sociocultural context, and competency-based procedural learning gleaned from the past thirty years of research in special education. In addition to subject specific content knowledge, core competencies for teachers of students with learning disabilities as recommended by The Council of Exceptional Children and the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities have been incorporated into the design of the program. The California Standards for the Teaching Profession and the Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Programs have also been source documents for establishing the conceptual, theoretical and philosophical framework for Education Specialist Mild/Moderate Intern Professional Development Program.

**LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BRANCH
DISTRICT SPECIAL EDUCATION INTERN PROGRAM**



A three year post baccalaureate teacher preparation program
grounded in sound educational theory, mapped to the standards of the
California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and practiced in the classroom

District Intern Program
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
Elementary

Course #	Course Title	Hours	Salary Points

Pre-Service Orientation

Ed. 101 ORIENTATION TO THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM 120 Hrs.6 Pts.

The three-week orientation provides an overview of the District Intern Program and Los Angeles Unified School District policies and procedures and the critical skills necessary to effectively manage a classroom. Participants spend eight of the days together at the Professional Development Center focusing on outstanding classroom practices and seven days in guided classroom observations at various school sites with the support of a coach. Completion of a two-week lesson plan is required.

Year 1 Program

Ed 201 MANAGING THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT 16 Hrs. 1 Pt.

Assertive Discipline focuses on practical strategies to promote positive student behavior in the classroom. Major topics include an overview of discipline and management, developing age-appropriate rules, follow-through and consequences, putting it all together, and getting parents on your side.

Ed. 202 a & b CURRICULUM AND METHODS OF TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 32Hrs. 2 Pts.

Interns will learn to design a balanced comprehensive literacy program with an emphasis on phonemic awareness, phonics and spelling. The course will include the teaching of literature, embedding authentic assessment into instruction and developing a theme integrating literature with appropriate content areas.

Ed. 204 CURRICULUM AND METHODS OF TEACHING MATH AND SCIENCE 32Hrs. 2 Pts.

The course provides an introduction to the themes of science and strands of mathematics as explained in the State Science and Mathematics Frameworks. Practical strategies to integrate mathematics and science in the classroom through investigations, problem solving and assessment are emphasized.

Ed 205 a CURRICULUM AND METHODS OF TEACHING CULTURE DIVERSITY 32 Hrs. 2 Pts.

The purpose of the course is to sensitize teachers to working with multiethnic multilingual students in a large urban school district. Instructional strategies for

promoting human relations, handling stereotyping and prejudice and teaching cultural diversity are addressed.

Ed. 205 b CULTURAL COMMUNITY CONNECTION (INDEPENDENT STUDY)
32 Hrs. 1 Pt.

Each intern is required to complete and present an independent project that demonstrates understanding of the community in which the school is located. The project must address specific issues related to student's ethnic and cultural diversity.

Ed. 211.11 CURRICULUM AND METHODS OF TEACHING 16 Hrs. 1 Pt.

English as a Second language

While current research in language acquisition and District policy are addressed, the course emphasizes practical teaching strategies for teaching English to speakers of design and the use of resources.

Ed. 301 a and b PRACTICE IN TEACHING SKILLS (INDEPENDENT STUDY)
OBSERVATION/DEMONSTRATION 64 Hrs. 2 Pt.

Interns identify an area of professional growth design and implement a Plan of Improvement in the target area. Requirements include attending workshops or conferences, meeting with mentors and/or peers for professional dialogue and maintaining written reflections.

Ed. 302 a AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT: PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO
DEVELOPMENT 16 Hrs 1 Pt.

The course assists interns in developing the required professional portfolio. The portfolio process includes the collection or documentation and reflection over time on personal professional growth in four identified domains of teacher competence. Interns present their portfolios during exit interviews at the end of their final year in the program.

Ed. 420 BCLAD/CLAD METHODOLOGY 32 Hrs. 2 Pts.

This course, which helps prepare interns for the BCLAD/CLAD exam, covers theories of first and second-language development language structure and use with an emphasis on English. In addition, theories and methods of bilingual education are discussed including such topics as ESL instruction and SDAIE and language assessment.

Ed. 421 BCLAD/CLAD CROSS-CULTURAL DIVERSITY 16 Hrs. 1 Pt.

This course, which helps prepare interns for the BCLAD/CLAD exam covers the nature of culture, cross-cultural interaction, cultural diversity in California and issues related to culturally responsive instruction.

**LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL EDUCATION DISTRICT INTERN PROGRAM**

**MILD/MODERATE SPECIALIST IN SPECIAL EDUCATION CREDENTIAL
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

(One Salary Unit equals 16 Clock Hours)

Second Year Courses

<u>COURSE</u>	<u>SALARY POINT TITLE</u>	<u>UNITS</u>
<u>EDSE 400: ORIENTATION TO SPECIAL EDUCATION: PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES</u>		(6)
Legal aspects, current federal, state and district guidelines, procedures and related practices in special education. Emphasizes issues of diversity, classroom organization and management, generic assessment, curriculum, and instructional strategies, federal, state, community and district resources.		
<u>EDSE 401: CHARACTERISTICS AND EDUCATION: MILD/MODERATE DISABILITIES</u>		(1)
Examination of the diverse, cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical characteristics of individuals with mild/moderate disabilities and their educational needs. Focuses on historical, philosophical and sociological trends in the education of individuals with mild/moderate disabilities.		
<u>EDSE 402: ASSESSMENT, CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION: MILD/MODERATE DISABILITIES</u>		(2)
Practical and theoretical aspects of assessment and measurement in special education. Focuses on formal and informal measures as they relate to the development of curriculum and individualized instructional programs for individuals with mild/moderate disabilities.		
<u>EDSE 403: METHODS OF TEACHING MUSIC AND ART</u>		(1)
Instructional strategies and techniques for teaching art/music appreciation and expression as means of communication and for personal, social, and career development.		
<u>EDSE 404: METHODS OF TEACHING PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HEALTH</u>		(1)
Methods of teaching physical and health education, K-12, with emphasis on physical fitness, and life enhancing health habits. Also focuses on the important role of play, games, sports, dance and recreation in the personal and social development of persons with mild/moderate disabilities.		

EDSE 405: POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT

(1)

Instructional strategies for supporting positive behavior and the development of social competence through direct instruction of social skills. Covers regulations mandated by AB 2386, (Hughes Bill), including functional behavioral analysis.

EDSE 406: COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION:

(1)

Issues and problems in collaboration and effective practices for consultation and communication with families, general educators, other school personnel and staff. Emphasizes development of cross cultural communication skills and building partnerships with families of persons with special learning needs from diverse backgrounds.

EDSE 407: MULTICULTURAL ASPECTS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING:

(2)

Instructional strategies, methods and techniques for teaching individuals with special learning needs from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Emphasizes recognition and acceptance of cultural and linguistic pluralism as powerful influences on student learning and achievement; development of culturally sensitive modes of instruction and curriculum for English language learning students; and instructional strategies for teaching multi-culturalism in special education settings.

Third Year Courses

EDSE 408: METHODS OF TEACHING SOCIAL STUDIES, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE (1)

Instructional strategies for teaching social studies, science, and mathematics in multi-level, classrooms with multi-age emphasis on access to the state framework for individuals with special learning needs.

EDSE 409: COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATION (1)

Advanced issues in collaborative consultation, emphasizing collaboration with general educators to provide inclusive and supportive environments for individuals with special learning needs.

EDSE 410: TRANSITION, VOCATIONAL, AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT (1)

Focuses on issues of transition, vocational, and career development with emphasis on family involvement and development of Individualized Transition Plans.

EDSE 411: LANGUAGE AND LITERACY IN SPECIAL EDUCATION (1)

Principles, curriculum materials, instructional strategies and techniques for teaching reading and language arts with emphasis on utilization of alternative modes, augmentative, assistive devices and computer technology.

EDSE 412: COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY IN SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSROOMS (1)

Focuses on the use of computers for management of service delivery and on instructional strategies and techniques for teaching computer skills to students with special learning needs.

EDSE 500 a. b. c: ADVANCED SEMINARS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION (1-3)

Current issues and trends in special education. Focuses on current research and practice.

EDSE 501: PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND DEVELOPMENT (INDUCTION PLAN) (2)

EDSE 301C: PRACTICE IN TEACHING SKILLS (1)

Field experiences, supervised practica in general and special education classrooms.

EDSE 302 b and c: AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT-PORTFOLIO and PORTFOLIO PRESENTATION (1)

See 302A.

The Education Specialist Program consists of 660 hours of instruction in both general education and special education over a three year period. The coursework is matched to the Commission's Standards of Program Quality and Effectiveness. Interns were asked to report the hours spent in job-related activities. The estimates by the interns are listed in Table 8. The interns estimated spending 48.7 hours a week on work and preparation related activities.

Table 8

**Average weekly hours intern graduates
spend on job-related activities.**

	Teaching Classes	Planning Lessons	Attending Classes/ Training Sessions	Conferring with Mentor(s)/ Support Persons	Other	Total
First Year	24.6	13.68	4.57	3.27	2.45	48.57
Second year	29.1	9.7	4.4	2.2	2.2	47.6
Graduates	28.3	10.2	4.45	3.05	4.15	50.15
Average	27.3	11.2	4.5	2.8	2.9	48.7

As was mentioned in the first section of this report, the credential for education specialists teachers for students with mild to moderate disabilities authorizes teaching of students with many types of disabilities. The preparation programs must include instruction in all of the areas of disability that an intern is likely to encounter. Table 9 shows in some cases interns teach students with various disabilities before they receive preparation or instruction in those disabilities. The program needs to be sure that the assignment of interns in terms of the disabilities of students that they teach is consistent with the preparation they have received.

Table 9

**Please check all of the appropriate boxes
to indicate the instruction or experiences
that you have had with students who have disabilities.**

Area of Disability	Skill and Knowledge Instruction by Intern Program	Taught Students With This Disability	Assisted Other Teachers	Observed	No Experience
Autism	16	27	16	21	11
Emotionally Disturbed	32	49	18	16	3
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	11	19	9	18	19
Blind/Visual Impairments	8	16	9	15	25
Deaf/Blind	5	7	5	14	33
Physical, Health and Orthopedic Impairments	11	31	17	21	13
Speech Language Impairments	19	43	13	16	10
Multiple Disabilities	20	33	15	21	13
Traumatic Brain Injury	11	20	12	11	24

3. Does the program provide high quality instructional opportunities and opportunities to apply all competencies included in the Commission's District Intern Mild/Moderate Education Specialist Standards?

In the questionnaire interns were asked to judge the quality of the instruction and services they had received. In general they were quite satisfied. Table 10, 11 and 12 below provide the intern's responses. The interns believe they have been supported, although intern responses to other questions and opinions given in interviews state that support could be more timely and more connected to the instructional program. Among the most impressive estimates of program quality are those made by the interns listed in Table 10 in items i, j, and k. The interns are confident in the skills they are receiving. They believe they are respected and considered peers by their colleagues. In both the questionnaire and in the evaluation done by the district, interns believe there is a significant increase in their teaching skills based on the instruction and the experiences they are receiving.

The two areas that were rated the lowest relate to the development of an individualized professional development plan. Because statutes require that the program include all of the requirements of Level I and Level II preparation, the preparation program must include all of the requirements of both levels. It is expected in the program that interns in the first year of the special education portion would not have much exposure to the development of an individualized plan, but graduates and second year interns should. The disaggregated results show that some of the graduates and some of the second year students had not had this type of experience.

Table 11 shows the interns were quite satisfied and confident the preparation they have and are receiving has been quite valuable. Only a few areas seemed to need considerable improvement. Instruction in the use of technology,

knowledge of assistive devices, and the history and philosophy of special education were the areas most frequently listed as of little value to the interns. Some of the interns expressed that instruction in mental retardation and disorders such as attention deficit disorder needed more attention in the program.

I found the three week orientation very helpful! There was a tremendous amount of information that helped me immediately in the classroom. (X5)

The Educational Specialist Program is a lot more informative than the program I attended last year. The three week orientation was thorough, practical and well organized. I feel that I have a lot more support from district personnel this year. I am learning quite a bit. I believe it is important to learn teaching skills, immediately practice, then get feedback right away. (X9)

Table 12 shows that the interns were generally quite satisfied with the services that they received. The lowest rated areas were in the formal support provided by the district (see items e, f, g, and h in Table 12). In one in eight instances the interns indicated that formal mentor services were not (yet) available (see item e).

The major weakness of the District Intern Program was the availability of mentors from the beginning of the year. (Z 6)

I am seriously disappointed in the too little, too late mentoring. I have often felt overwhelmed and alone at my school.... (Z 17)

Table 10

**Estimate by Education Specialist Interns
of Quality of Services Offered and
Interns Competence as a Teacher**

N=56

Category	Not At All True	Sometimes True	Usually True	Always True
a. My special education mentor teacher has been accessible to me.	6	9	11	27
b. Other school and district personnel have been available to assist me.	1	11	15	29
c. My teaching has been adequately observed, and my instructional skills and needs have been communicated clearly to me.	3	12	20	21
d. A school site administrator explained the criteria that was/will be used to evaluate my performance as a teacher.	6	7	20	23
e. I clearly understand the standards that are used to evaluate my performance as a teacher.	1	13	17	25
f. I have developed with my support provider an individualized induction plan that guides my studies in the program and my professional growth after completion of the program.	30	5	10	11
g. I have developed as part of my individualized (professional) induction plan a specific emphasis in an area such as transition, inclusive education, early childhood, behavioral intervention, emotional disturbance, or technology.	24	6	9	17
h. When I have a question about school or special education policies or practices, I know whom to ask the question.	11	5	18	32
i. I expect my teaching skills to improve as a result of the courses and training programs that I have attended.	01	2	18	35
j. The students, parents, and other teachers at my school consider me to be a qualified teacher.	0	2	13	41
k. The courses and training programs that I attend have improved my teaching skills.	0	7	21	28
l. My support person (e.g. Mentor) has a clear understanding of the coursework I am taking.	15	15	13	11
m. After each administrator's evaluation of my teaching, I have received clear feedback about my teaching strengths and weaknesses.	3	10	17	25
Percentage of Total	13.8	14.2	27.6	44.4

Table 11

**Estimate of Value by District Intern Education Specialist of Training
Received in Special Education District Intern Preparation Program**

Category	X-Not Available/ Not Taken Yet	0-Did Not Attend/Receive	1-Of No Value	2-Of Little Value	3-Of Some Value	4-Of Great Value
j. Knowledge of relevant laws, mandates, regulations, and procedural safeguards.	0	0	0	2	14	39
k. Knowledge of diverse learners including the impact for various disabilities on the provision of services to individuals from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.	0	1	1	5	18	29
l. History/Philosophy of Special Education Services.	1	1	2	10	21	20
m. Instructional Strategies for Mild/Moderate Students	0	0	1	5	15	32
n. Behavioral management strategies, including environments to accommodate diverse physical, emotional, cultural and linguistic needs.	0	0	0	7	19	29
o. Strategies for communicating with parents, primary care givers, and other educators the results and implications of assessments, as well as identifying students strengths and needs.	0	0	0	7	27	19
p. Strategies for implementing an integrated, collaborative, inclusionary services model.	2	1	1	7	27	17
q. Knowledge of a variety of formal and informal assessment instruments and ability to use assessment information to modify lesson plans and curriculum.	0	0	1	7	21	26
r. Ability to use technology and supplementary aids in delivery of special education services.	9	2	2	8	25	10
s. Ability to use technology and supplementary aids in delivery of special education services.	1	0	3	9	24	19
t. Ability to adjust, adapt, modify and connect instruction, including core curriculum, to prior knowledge and student interests and needs.	1	0	2	7	16	28
u. Ability to develop, implement and track an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), an Individualized Transition Plan (ITP), and a Behavior Intervention Plan and understand the differences among them.	1	0	0	5	16	35
v. Ability to employ emergency intervention, on-going positive support and age appropriate least intrusive behavior strategies.	0	0	1	5	24	25
w. Knowledge of the common characteristics of disability categories authorized by the mild/ moderate credential and implications for service delivery for the following categories:						
a. Emotionally Disturbed/Behavior Disordered	2	2	0	5	23	22
b. Learning Disabled	0	1	0	0	18	36
c. Mild/Moderate Mental Retardation	3	3	2	9	22	16
d. Other Health Impaired (A.D.D/A.D.H.D.)	3	1	1	9	23	18
Percentage of Total	2.5	1.3	1.8	10.5	38.3	45.5

Table 12

**Estimate of Value by District Intern Education Specialist
of Activities in Preparation Program**

Category	X-Not Available/ Not Taken Yet	0-Did Not Attend/Receive	1-Of No Value	2-Of Little Value	3-Of Some Value	4-Of Great Value
a. Written materials that have been given to you to explain the District Intern Program and the Education Specialist Option.	0	1	0	2	28	25
b. Meetings in which you were informed of your duties and your school district's policies and practices.	0	0	0	5	20	20
c. Preservice Orientation Program of the District Intern Program.	0	0	0	2	16	38
d. Second Preservice Orientation Program related to the Education Specialist District Intern Program.	0	0	1	2	11	42
e. Assistance provided by your special education mentor teacher.	3	4	0	7	15	27
f. Assistance provided by your grade level or department chairperson, or other coordinators in your school site.	0	0	2	5	24	25
g. Assistance provided by your school principal, assistant principal, or other site level administrator.	0	2	1	9	15	27
h. Assistance provided by support personnel from the district, including district intern administrators.	1	0	4	9	18	25
i. Assistance provided by other teachers in your school (other than your mentor and your department head).	0	0	0	5	18	33
j. The overall quality of feedback about your teaching that you have received from all school or district personnel.	0	0	0	2	24	29
k. Guides (frameworks, course of study, textbooks, and any instructional materials) that have been used in your training program.	0	0	0	2	28	25
Percentage of Total	.7	1.1	1.3	8.2	35.6	53.1

4 & 5. Are interns appropriately assigned, supported and assessed? How are persons that offer instruction, support, and assessment services assigned to the project.

Intern Assignment. Interns are assigned based on vacancies for teachers at specific schools. For the first year of the Education Specialist District Intern Program interns were assigned to a general education classroom. In the second and third year, the intern assignment is a special day class for students with mild to moderate disabilities. The goal of the program was to assign interns to a school where they could continue their assignment for the full term of the program. It has turned out that this continuation of service is not possible because the vacancies for special education teachers did not match the schools where interns were assigned for their general education year. Only 7 of 46 of the current special education interns were able to continue their service in the same school.

The issue of moving from one school to another was a concern for interns, for principals and for district staff. In the interviews the interns spoke of the conflict of leaving the school of their general education classroom. Several of the principals had encouraged them to leave the education specialist program and stay on at the school on an

emergency permit. It was also clear that the district administration did not like moving the interns, but because the program is driven by vacancies, there was little choice.

In the interviews with principals, without exception the principals wanted more interns in their schools. As was mentioned above, in some cases they liked the interns so well they encouraged the interns to leave the program so that they could keep them at their school in a general education classroom. All of the principals that were interviewed said that one of their first phone calls when they have a vacancy is to the personnel division to request the placement of a district intern. They noted the frequency interns chose or were selected to leadership positions in their schools. The principals talked about the “new ideas” that the interns brought. They called them “high energy persons and initiators.” One principal characterized the interns in his school by, “They want to be there.” Another said he wanted more district interns because, “I know what I am getting.”

The other issue related to assignment relates to the expertise of the interns and the range of disabilities that students possess in the classes where they are assigned. As Table 9 shows, frequently an intern’s class includes students with a wide range of disabilities. Because this is a three year program and the instruction is dispersed throughout the program interns will be confronted with many instructional challenges before that segment of instruction has been addressed. Because these are teachers-in-training care should be given by those responsible for assigning the interns that the range of disabilities in the assignment is reasonable given the teacher’s novice status.

Intern Support. Information from the study questionnaires and the interviews conducted provide data that the formal support system provided to the Education Specialist Interns is the weakest element of this program. This does not mean that the interns do not receive support, but it does mean this is an area that can be greatly improved.

The support from the DI instructors and other D.I.'s in my program. On the Thursdays when we were allowed to spend time discussing our classrooms I felt better about myself as a teacher. It is nice to know that others have some of the same problems that I do. It was also nice to share success stories. The ideas that other D.I.'s came up with for some of my classroom problems were a great help. (G1)

Table 13 reports the support received from all sources including the number of persons who helped the interns, the positions of those persons and the types of assistance provided. This shows most Education Specialist Interns received a good deal of support from a variety of education professionals in the areas that are appropriate for novice teachers. Other teachers in the intern's school were particularly active in providing support. More than 80% of the interns listed their principal(s) as an important source of support.

General assistance and problem solving were the most frequently mentioned areas that interns requested and received support. Planning was the next most frequently mentioned area where assistance was given. In nearly every other survey that the authors of this report have done, classroom management has been either the most frequent or second most frequent area of concern or area where the credential candidates said they needed the most help. However, this group of Education Specialist Interns listed management far less frequently than either planning or general support. Follow up inquiries during interviews that were done with interns did not completely clarify why this was the case. Staff's speculation is that the program spends a good deal of instructional time on management issues, and based on interviews, this is a very confident group of district interns who have had an average of three years of prior experience with students.

Interns and graduate interns reported that they were observed an average of four times a year. They estimated that they had an average of nine opportunities to confer with their mentors. They said they had observed their mentor teacher an average of four times a year. One area that received praise from several interns was the number of times mentors and resource teachers helped the interns find and order materials. Knowing where to find things can be a significant help for beginning teachers. Many of the interns appreciated the support relationship that was created. One suggestion was:

Keep Mentors (for) 2 years of Sp. Ed. (Intern) should have the same mentor for consistent support.(Z 6)

Table 13

**Support Received by
District Intern Education Specialist**

Persons Who Have Helped the District Intern.

1 Name	2-3 Names	4-6 Names	7 + Names
2	17	25	10

**Type of positions held by the persons who
provided support to district intern.**

Support Provider/Mentor	Other Teachers	Dept. Chair	Specialist	Principal/VP	District/DI Personnel	Other
35	96	11	47	45	26	7

Type of assistance provided to district intern.

Planning	General Assistance/ Problems	Management	Supplies	Curriculum	Special Education IEP	Other
53	110	25	13	16	9	14

As was mentioned earlier a sizable number of the interns noted that the formal support process was incomplete. Twelve percent of the interns said they had not been assigned a mentor. Others said they were not assigned a mentor (or other formal support provider) until a month or more after they had been teaching. This was confirmed in the interviews with support providers and those who assign support providers. The administrators of the district intern program and the mentor program confirmed that district procedures frequently result in more than a month passing without a formal assignment of a support provider for the intern. In some cases this was because the mentor had not yet been selected. In others it was because of lack of communication among the divisions within the district. All who were interviewed on this issue agreed that this was a concern. All agreed this was a problem that could be solved.

I feel the mentor program should be more integrated into the Intern program, allowing the mentors to monitor our assignments and progress. (G3)

Communication between mentor office and intern program should be improved. I did not experience any problems with my mentor, however some colleagues of mine did. I think the mentor office needs to be aware of the requirements interns have during the program. (G4)

Another concern is that the formal support system is done at a distance. Only seven of the 46 current interns reported that their mentor teacher taught at the same school as the intern. This is at least partially because there are not special education mentors at every school. Many of the interns and mentors have overcome the distance issue through the use of phone as electronic mail. Nevertheless, most of the interns expressed interest in more frequent observations and conferences and more frequent opportunities for occasional discussions

One of the expectations of the Commission's Education Specialist Standards is that district interns will have opportunities to communicate and collaborate with other education professionals. Table 14 shows the frequency of opportunities for interaction reported by the district interns in this pilot study. In general the interns reported consistent contact with other education professionals. The interns reported relatively infrequent contact with parent organization leaders and members of the community.

Table 14

**Opportunity for Communication and Collaboration
with other Educators and Service Providers**

N=56

Collaboration Source	No Contact	Phone or Electronic Contact	Occasional Meeting or Encounter	Ongoing Working Relationship
Site Administrators	1	1	18	34
Counselors	6	2	21	23
Psychologists	1	1	11	43
Speech Therapists	13	2	21	25
Other Special Education Teachers (Individually)	0	2	8	46
General Education Teachers (Individually)	0	2	13	42
PTA Leaders	32	1	14	8
Social Workers	23	15	15	3
Community Leaders (e.g. Community Mental Health, Ministers)	36	9	10	3
IEP Development Teams	14	2	11	26
Student Study (Success) Teams(s)	22	1	19	13
Site Management Team	22	0	12	19
Program Specialists	10	6	18	23
District Intern Staff including Site Coordinators	3	3	8	42
Other	0	1	2	8
TOTAL	183	48	201	359

Assessment.

Assessment is a multi-tiered process. Formal performance assessment by school site administration using normal standardized district processes. Interns also receive formative assessment based on the California Standards for the Teaching Profession. Interns also are assessed based on assignment completion and completion of entries into their portfolio. The annual evaluation, which is required by statute, is the process used for all non-tenured teachers in the district, commonly called the Stull process. The evaluation is carried out by the principal or designee. In most circumstances a pre and post conference is held.

The district intern program conducts an evaluation of classroom performance based on the California Standards for the Teaching Profession. This year the Program has begun using the California Formative Assessment and Support System for Teachers. This system will be provided by the mentor or other designated support provider. The system will be used for both diagnostic and development purposes.

Interns also complete a portfolio development process. The portfolio includes copies of work completed in courses, student work, and specific tasks assigned by the program. Appendix A contains examples of four of these tasks.

One of the areas of concern for the interns was the seeming lack of connection between course assignments and portfolio tasks. Many of the interns requested that a better connection be made between the two types of assignments. Many of the interns said that they were feeling overwhelmed and were having to make choices among classroom planning, course assignments and portfolio entries. Usually because the portfolio entries did not have a time certain for delivery, they were the assignments that were neglected.

Communicating expectations of class work and due dates of assignments. A course syllabus would be a great help. (Z 24)

Better scheduling of classes to coordinate with our assignments (portfolio tasks). (G3)

Site Administrators are not fully aware of the ideas and information received through the District Intern Program. Some/many times, site administrators were not fully aware of state mandated requirements. (G10)

The major weaknesses in the DI program are in communication and consistency. The program always seems to be changing and because of the lack of communication it is hard to find people that all have the same story. We are never sure what we will eventually need to receive our credential. (X15)

6. What is the cost of the Program?

The Education Specialist District Intern Program is a tuition free program. Virtually all of the costs are paid for through a grant from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and from matching funds provided by the district. The district estimates that the program costs \$3,200 per intern per year. \$1,500 of these funds come from a alternative certification grant and the remainder is provided from internal district funds. The expenses in the program include the costs of paying the instructors for the 31 instructional modules in the program.

7. What procedures have been implemented to facilitate transfer of credit as called for in Education Code 44327?

The district has created a transcript that is provided to the intern upon request. It has been used when interns move to other districts or when they move to another state. It is also available to universities, but it appears that more work needs to be done to facilitate the transcripts and facilitate the transition of interns to other districts and to assist interns who want to pursue graduate degrees.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Education Code Section 44329 states, "If the District Intern Pilot Program is successful, the report shall include recommendations regarding expanding the program statewide." The three policy questions posed that guided this study are repeated here for convenience.

- Was the pilot program effective in preparing special education teachers?
- Does the program help meet the shortage of special education teachers in Los Angeles Unified School District?
- What are the criteria and circumstances necessary for this pilot preparation program to be expanded to other districts and other disability areas?

This section will first address the questions about whether this program is successful. The determination of success will be based on the degree to which the data from the study show that the pilot program provides positive responses to the first two policy questions. The course of judging the success of the program, the following questions will be addressed.

8. In what ways should the program be improved? What are the strengths of the program?
9. Is the program capable of preparing teachers for other areas of disability?
10. What is the potential for the transportability of the program?
11. What, if any, are the elements that should be included by any district that might elect to implement a District Intern Mild Moderate Education Specialist Program?

Conclusions

8. In what ways should the program be improved? What are the strengths of the program?

In general the District Intern Pilot Program to prepare Education Specialists (Mild/Moderate Disabilities) that is being implemented in Los Angeles Unified School District has been successful in preparing qualified, competent teachers of students with mild to moderate disabilities. The interns were quite satisfied with the instruction they had received and were confident of the skills they possess. The program has designed an instructional sequence that appears to address all of the Commission's Standards of Program Quality and Effectiveness and attends to the principles in the California Standards for the Teaching Profession. There was high praise for the practicality of the program and the support that was available from instructors and fellow interns.

The strengths of the program are the ability to implement strategies immediately, build a teaching support group immediately (other interns)....

The major strengths of the DI program are that they give you up-to-date material and hands-on material to take immediately back to the classroom. I feel I am better equipped to teach than those coming from the universities. (X15)

The hands-on approach works well in my opinion. We learn most from the actual experience and from others who have experienced and applied subject matter they are trying to teach. That is what the program does, gets real teachers from the same classroom populations to show us what works and doesn't and how to do it.(Z2)

There was high praise for the commitment of the district to high quality special education teachers.

I can strongly sense the commitment the program has to creating effective teachers.(Z 3)

There is a clear commitment to correct those areas that need improvement. Those areas that need to be reexamined are listed below.

A. There are some areas of the instructional program that should be examined for possible improvement. These are:

- The use of technology;
- Knowledge of assistive devices;
- History and philosophy of special education;
- Knowledge of mental retardation;
- Knowledge of disorders such as attention deficit disorder.

The program needs to assure every Education Specialist District Intern has an opportunity to complete all Level II Education Specialist requirements including an individualized (professional) induction plan, with a specific emphasis in an area such as transition, inclusive education, early childhood, behavioral intervention, emotional disturbance, or technology.

B. Although the support system as a whole provides a reasonable level of support, there are elements that should be improved. There should not be a gap between when the district interns begin full responsibility for their classroom and when they are assigned a mentor. Although the school site has apparently filled the void in the meantime, district policies should be reexamined so that mentors can be available during the critical beginning weeks of the school year.

Relatively few of the mentors reside at the same sites as the district interns. The district should work toward the goal of having a special education mentor at each site where a special education district intern is placed.

C. There should be a better connection between course assignments and portfolio tasks. The program should endeavor to link and coordinate these assignments.

D. The program should take care to build a strong cadre of instructors. The interns reported that some of the instructors stated they were hired at the last minute. Several interns suggested that course syllabi should be available at the beginning of each course. Further, they suggested each course have clear goals and expectations.

9. Is the program capable of preparing teachers for other areas of disability?

This question was asked directly to the administrators of the program. With one exception, all of the administrators from all of the divisions recommended that the program not be extended to other areas of disability. Based on the experience that they have had over the prior three years they believed they should continue to build and expand the program for teachers of students with mild to moderate disabilities rather than expand to other areas. In particular, they want to expand the group of instructors. The program emphasized that the program should not expand beyond its resources, particularly its human resources. No expansion should occur until there is reasonable assurance there will be sufficient high quality instructors available. No expansion should occur unless there is reasonable assurance there are enough special education support services available to interns.

Interns summarized their experience with the following statements.

A lot of teaching comes natural to me, or I've learned a lot about it over the years (military/teaching theater N.Y.) I'm not sure. I say above in reference to teaching General Ed. students. Without the D.I. program, I would be at a total loss (would have quit). The students I now deal with are totally different from anything I could have imagined. I feel more prepared each day as I face my students because aside

from being more patient, I've learned to stay on my toes and be ready for the unexpected (behavior-wise) particularly. (Z 19)

It was sometimes difficult being the pilot spec.ed. program. There were not many examples of what was expected of us, and sometimes what was expected of us changed at the last minute. The class would often have different ideas about what was expected of us on different assignments and portfolio tasks. It would be nice for future classes to have examples of what is expected. (G1)

The major strengths of the Spec. Ed. D.I. program can be summed up in a few words: They give you what you need to make it as a teacher. They bring the basics to you so you will be prepared for what may come next. (X4)

10. & 11 What is the potential for the transportability of the program? What, if any, are the elements that should be included by any district that might elect to implement a District Intern Mild/Moderate Education Specialist Program?

District administrators were asked to respond to the necessary elements to create an Education Specialist District Intern Program in other districts or consortia of districts. As with the question of expansion into other areas of disability, the district personnel thought the task of mounting this type of program was a daunting task. The program developers must be able to put together an instructional program that deals with a considerable array of skills and knowledge. In the case of the Los Angeles program there are more than thirty instructional modules that must be satisfied. There needs to be administrative staff released from other duties to carry out the administrative and support aspect of the program.

There must be space allocated for program administrators and space allocated where the instruction is offered. The space issue is of no small consequence in this time when every building is being used to meet the needs of the Class Size Reduction Initiative. Space allocation is one indicator of the district's commitment to the program. In Los Angeles the shifting of the offices of the district intern program and the need for consistent, dedicated space at locations convenient to the sites where interns work and space that could hold an entire cohort of interns can meet has not been completely resolved.

There must be a support network that provides the assistance to assure intern success. This means that the district(s) that develop the program must have a sufficient number of special education mentors committed to a district intern program from the first day of the program.

Implementation of a district intern specialist program will require an enormous commitment of resources by the participating district(s). Unless the district(s) clearly have the capacity to provide a well developed teacher preparation curriculum, have sufficient number of education specialist support providers and have administrators designated to staff the program they should not undertake the creation of a district intern education specialist program.

Similarly, it should be clear that the proposed education specialist program has sufficient instructional and support expertise to address all competency areas at both initial (Level 1) and advanced (Level II) levels. They should demonstrate the capacity of the program by responding to the Standards of Program Quality and Effectiveness for District Intern Education Specialist Programs.

Recommendations

1. The District Intern Pilot Program to prepare Education Specialists (Mild/Moderate Disabilities) that is being implemented in Los Angeles Unified School District should examine its instructional program in the areas listed in the Conclusions item 9A to determine if additional instruction is necessary.
2. The formal support system should be examined and revised to assure that every intern has a mentor teacher when s/he takes over responsibility for a classroom and provides timely assistance throughout the program.

3. The program should coordinate the assessment and instructional elements of the program. Course syllabi, clearly stated goals and due dates should be made available to the interns at the beginning of each course segment.
4. Programs should be authorized to be a District Intern Program to prepare Education Specialists (Mild/Moderate Disabilities) only if they clearly demonstrate the capacity to develop such a program. All of the items listed in numbers 10 and 11 in the Conclusions above must be present and the program **MUST** demonstrate the capacity to provide an instructional and support program that meets that Standards of Program Quality and Effectiveness for District Intern Education Specialist Programs.